

# Snapshot 2011:



How many workers in Maine have a disability?



How many adults with disabilities are employed?



What services are being used by Maine workers with disabilities?

## Maine Workers with Disabilities

An annual publication of  
Maine's Commission on Disability and Employment  
and the CHOICES CEO Project

Cover photographs include models, and are used for illustrative purposes only.

This document is available on the Internet in several formats at:

[www.choicesceo.org/new/datasnapshot.html](http://www.choicesceo.org/new/datasnapshot.html)

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## Maine Workers with Disabilities

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<sup>i</sup> The Commission on Disability and Employment is named in statute as one of four standing subcommittees of the Maine Jobs Council. Its mission is to advise, consult and assist the executive and legislative branches on activities of state government that affect the employment of individuals with disabilities.

<sup>ii</sup> The CHOICES CEO (Comprehensive Employment Opportunity) project is funded by a grant (#1QACMS030316) from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, which runs through 2011 to help Maine develop and implement a strategic plan to maximize the employment of workers with disabilities. All research and development activities for this project are provided out of the Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine. For more information visit: [www.choicesceo.org](http://www.choicesceo.org).

## Introduction



- **How many workers in Maine have a disability?**
- **How many adults with a disability are employed?**
- **What services are being used by Maine workers with disabilities?**

**Snapshot 2011** provides the data that answers these and other questions on employment and disability specific to the state of Maine.

Welcome to ***Snapshot 2011: Maine Workers with Disabilities***. This is the fifth in a series of annual booklets summarizing basic facts about employment status and services for people with disabilities in Maine. In the past, members of Maine's disability community expressed concerns that there is a lack of state-specific information. Nationwide estimates were sometimes cited to describe the situation in Maine; however, these masked important differences between Maine and the rest of the country. The annual ***Snapshot*** booklets address some of these data shortfalls by using information collected by agencies serving people in Maine, and from improved national surveys such as the American Community Survey (ACS), which has been expanded and revised in recent years to more accurately capture information for individual states.

A notable change to this year's ***Snapshot*** is that information about the population of individuals with disabilities, such as employment participation and poverty rate, only includes data from 2008 forward; no information from earlier years is presented. This is because there was a change in the way that disability is measured in the 2008 American Community Survey. More information about the 2008 ACS disability measure and how it changed is included at the end of this booklet.

Additional information about all of the data sources used in the ***Snapshot***, including how disability is measured and the strengths and limitations associated each data source, is provided on our online Data Dashboard at [choices.muskie.usm.maine.edu/dashboard/about\\_data.html](http://choices.muskie.usm.maine.edu/dashboard/about_data.html).

Note that ***Snapshot*** provides a view of the "state of the state" and should not be used for comparison across the government and other service agencies. Since every agency has a distinct population, mission, budget and data collection process, their employment placement rates are not directly comparable.

We hope that people with disabilities, advocates, policymakers and other stakeholders will find the information that follows useful to their efforts.

## Effect of the Maine Economy

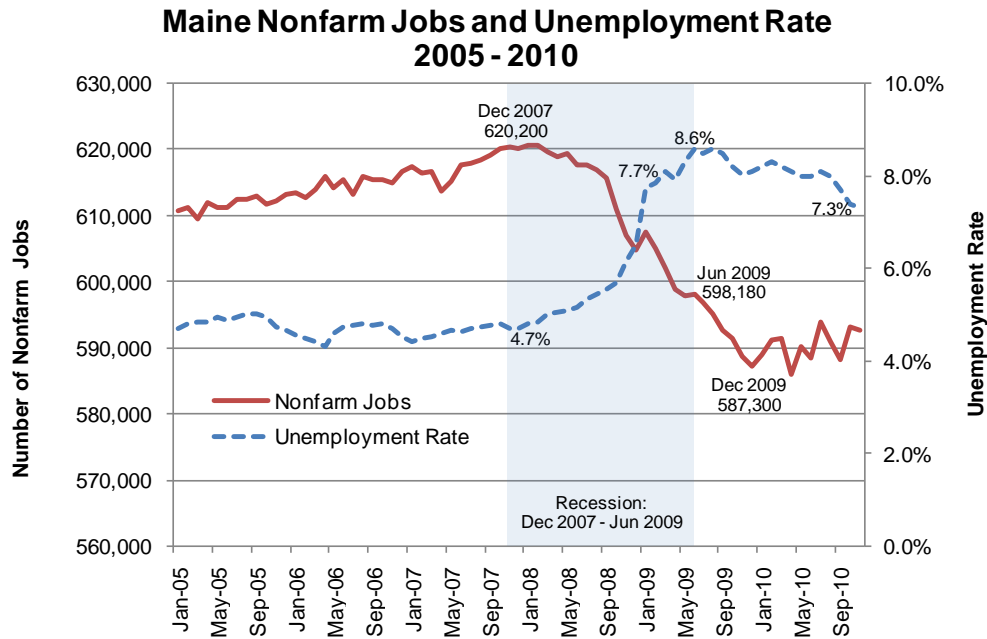
Employment prospects for people with and without disabilities alike are impacted by the health of Maine's economy. Most of the information presented in *Snapshot 2011* is from 2005 through 2009. The years 2005-2007 were a time of slow growth for the Maine economy, followed by a major worldwide recession. From January 2005 through January 2008 the economy added a total of 9,800 jobs, for an annual growth rate of 0.5%. The unemployment rate was at 4.7% in January 2008. After the recession began, job losses averaged 483 each month from January through July 2008, and then accelerated. Maine lost an average of more than 1,700 jobs each month from July 2008 through June 2009. Although the recession technically ended at that point, job losses continued in Maine through December 2009, when the total number of jobs fell to 587,300. The unemployment rate nearly doubled over the course of the recession, peaking at 8.6% in June of 2009. All told, Maine lost more than 22,000 jobs during the recession, and another 11,000 in the six months after the recession ended. How did Maine's job loss affect workers with disabilities? Some research that analyzed Current Population Survey (CPS) data concluded that between October 2008 and June 2010, job losses among workers with disabilities far exceeded those of workers without disabilities. Further, the research stated that this labor market volatility resulted in the proportion of employed U.S. workers identified as having disabilities declining by 9 percent. Thus the job loss likely had a disproportionately negative on workers with disabilities compared with their counterparts without disabilities.<sup>1</sup>

The sectors that have been affected most by the recession are manufacturing, construction, and retail. Together, these three sectors accounted for 21,800 lost jobs from December 2007 through December 2009—62 percent of all job losses. Only two sectors showed any gains in jobs during this time. Health Care and Social Assistance added 2,300 net new jobs, and Arts, Entertainment and Recreation added 200 jobs.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kaye, H. Stephen. October 2010. "The impact of the 2007–09 recession on workers with disabilities." Monthly Labor Review. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

<sup>2</sup> Evans, Dana. September 2010. *The Maine Labor Market 2010: Trends and Issues*. Maine Department of Labor, Center for Workforce Research and Information. <http://www.state.me.us/labor/lmis/pubs.html>



Source: Maine Department of Labor, Center of Workforce Research & Information. Seasonally Adjusted Civilian Labor Force Estimates, 1978-2010. <http://www.maine.gov/labor/lmis/laus.html> Retrieved January 20, 2011; and Seasonally Adjusted Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment. <http://www.maine.gov/labor/lmis/ces.html>. Retrieved January 20, 2011.

## Employment Participation

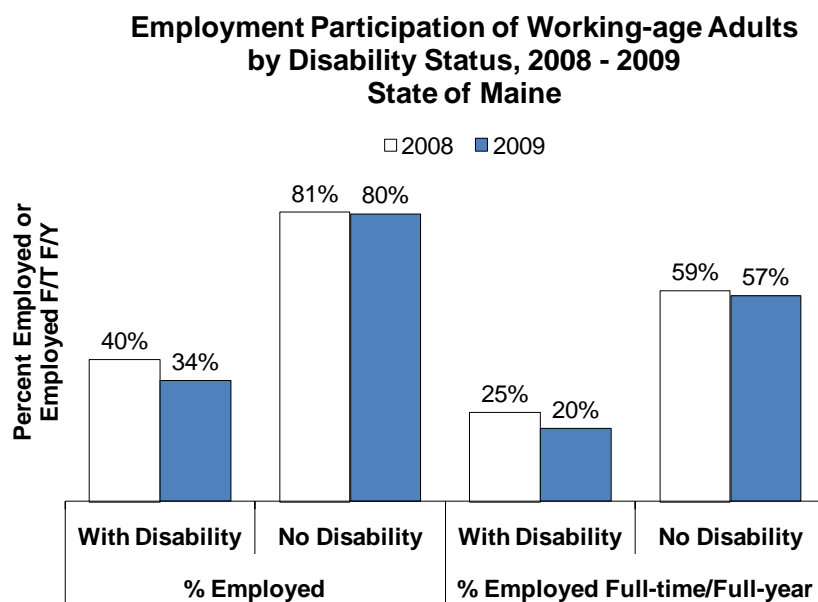
People with disabilities are an untapped resource for the state of Maine. There are many people with disabilities who want to work but who are unemployed, under-employed, or who have been unable to enter the job market. There are several programs in Maine—including the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, One-Stop CareerCenters and the CHOICES CEO project—that share a common goal of supporting people with disabilities who work or who would like to work. This section outlines several markers of employment participation that we would like to see increase.

### Chart I. Employment Participation of Working-age Adults in Maine by Disability Status

In 2009, there were about 109,000 working-age adults with a disability living in Maine. Of these, 37,000 were employed. The employment rate of people with disabilities is less than half the rate of those with no disability. This is true in both the state of Maine and the country as a whole.

In 2009, 34 percent of adults with disabilities were employed—compared to 80 percent of adults without a disability. In addition, about one in five working-age adults with disabilities were employed for more than 35 hours per week (full-time) and worked for more than 50 weeks (full-year). The rate of full-time/full-year work among adults with a disability is only about one-third that of adults with no disability.

The recession appears to have significantly impacted employment among workers with disabilities. Between 2008 and 2009, the estimated number of employed adults with a disability declined from 40,000 to 37,000, and the employment rate fell from 40 percent to 34 percent. Similarly, the rate of full-time/full-year employment among adults with a disability fell from 25 to 20 percent.

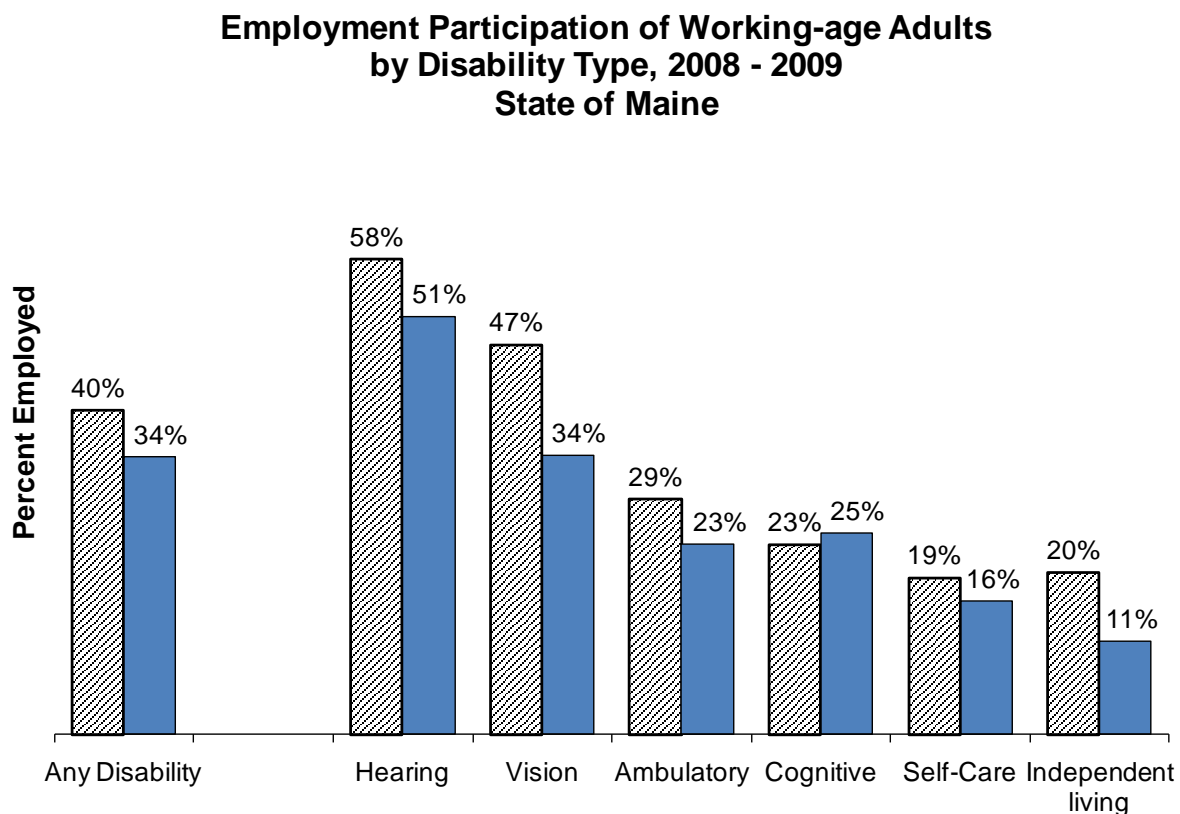


Source: Muskie School of Public Service calculations using the 2008-2009 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS)

## Chart II. Employment Participation of Working-age Adults in Maine by Disability Type

In general, employment participation is highest among adults with hearing and vision difficulties and lowest among those with self-care, and independent living difficulties (see definitions on page 17). About half of adults with hearing difficulties, and one third of adults with vision difficulties, reported work in the 2009 ACS. By comparison, less than one in five adults with self-care and independent living difficulties were employed. Twenty-three percent of adults with any ambulatory disability were employed, and twenty-five percent of adults with cognitive disabilities reported work.

Between 2008 and 2009, there were particularly large declines in the employment rate for adults with vision, hearing and independent living difficulties. The employment rate among adults with vision difficulties fell most dramatically, from 47 down to 34 percent, a reduction of 13 percent.



Source: Muskie School of Public Service calculations using the 2008-2009 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS)

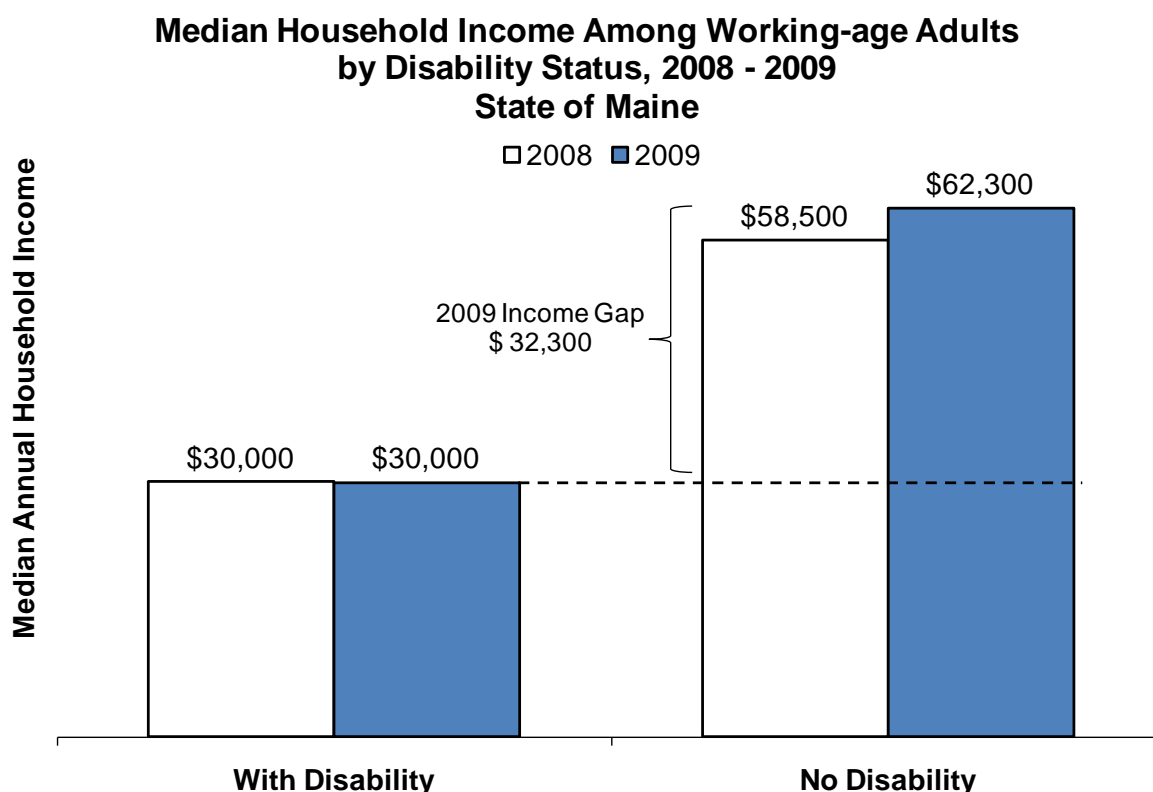


## Economic Well-being

One of the principle benefits of employment is getting paid. Because a majority of people with disabilities do not work, those without other resources must rely on government programs such as Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to meet their basic needs. Cash payments provided by SSI, and most payments from SSDI, are not sufficient to lift a household out of poverty. This section looks at household income and poverty rate. We expect that as people with disabilities gain better access to employment, household incomes will rise and poverty rates will fall.

### Chart III. Median Household Income of Working-age Adults in Maine by Disability Status

People with disabilities tend to live in households that have much less income than people without disabilities. In 2009, the median household income for a working-age person with a disability was \$30,000. This number is less than half the household income of those without a disability. The median income gap between adults with and without a disability in Maine was \$32,300.

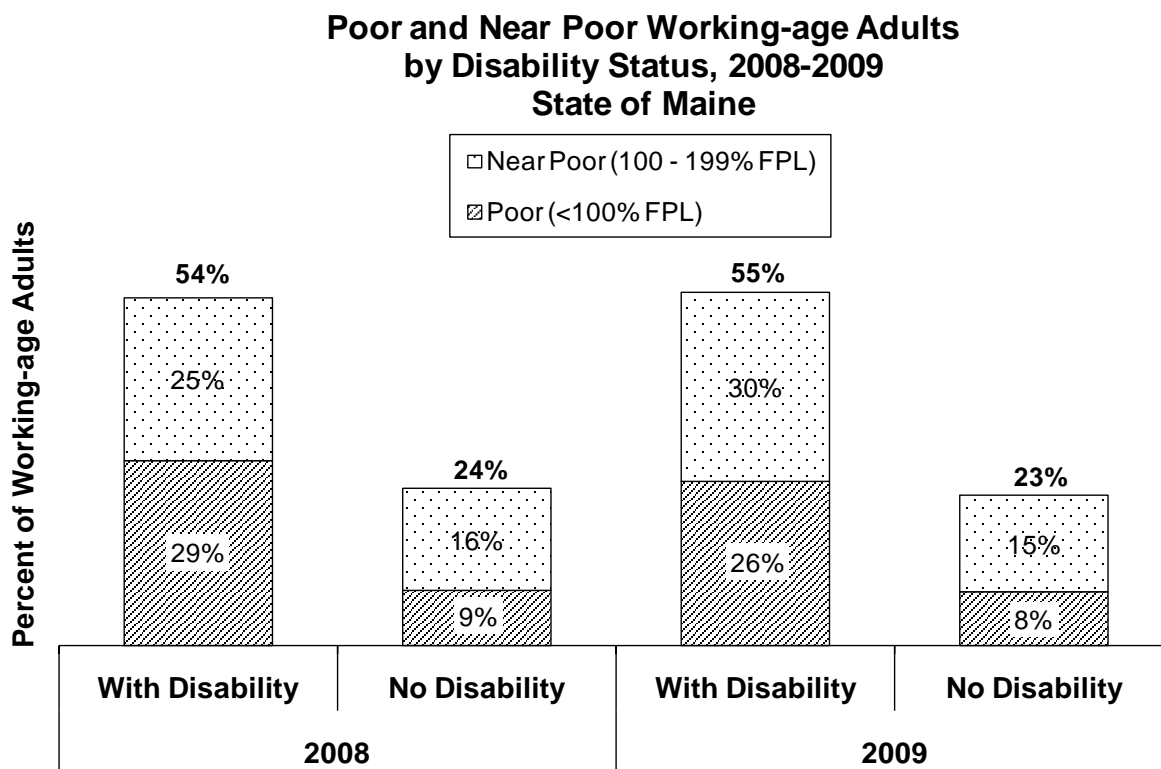


Source: Muskie School of Public Service calculations using the 2008-2009 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS)

## Chart IV. Poverty Status of Working-age Adults in Maine

In 2009, more than one quarter of all working-age adults with a disability were living below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). More than half were poor or near-poor, which means they had income below 200 percent of the FPL. Adults with a disability in Maine are more than three times as likely to live in poverty relative to adults without a disability. Poverty rates for adults with disabilities in Maine did not change significantly between 2008 and 2009.

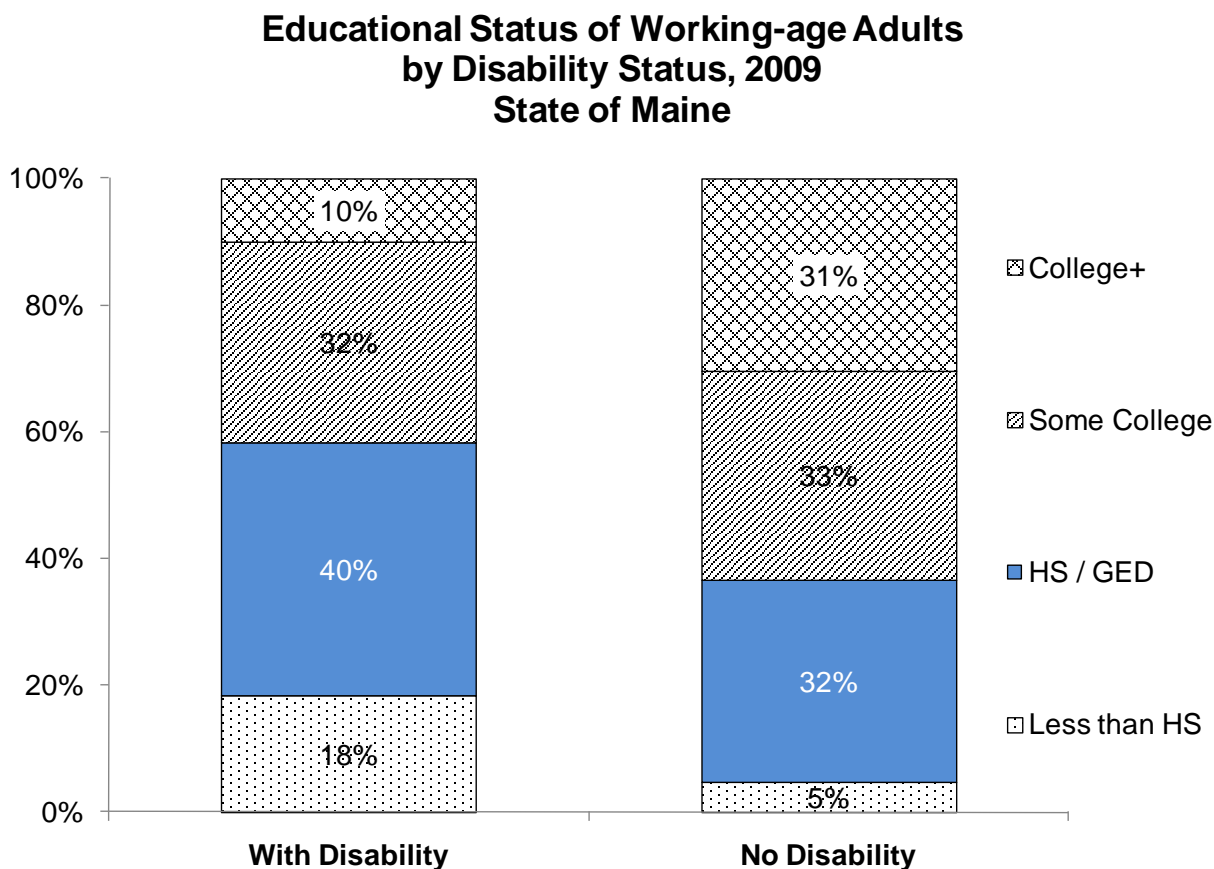
Note: The Federal Poverty Level for an individual in 2009 was \$10,830 per year, or \$903 per month.



Source: Muskie School of Public Service calculations using the 2008-2009 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS)

## Chart V. Education Status of Working-age Adults in Maine

Adults with disabilities in Maine, as a group, have less education than their non-disabled counterparts. In 2009, only 10 percent of adults with disabilities had a four-year college degree or higher, versus 31 percent of adults without disabilities. And almost one in five (18 percent) of adults with a disability had less than a high school degree or GED.



Source: Muskie School of Public Service calculations using the 2009 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS)

## Employment Services

Maine has several programs that help people with disabilities prepare for work, find a job, or keep their cash benefits or health coverage when they return to work. This section highlights information on the use and outcomes of these services.

### **Chart VI. People with Disabilities Receiving Services from Maine One-Stop CareerCenters**

One-Stop CareerCenters provide services to job seekers in the general population, including people with disabilities, through several different programs.

In 2009, among the customers served by the Adult and Dislocated Workers programs (funded through the federal Workforce Investment Act), the CareerCenters reported 66 customers with disabilities who exited.<sup>3</sup> Of the 66 people who exited, 72 percent entered employment.

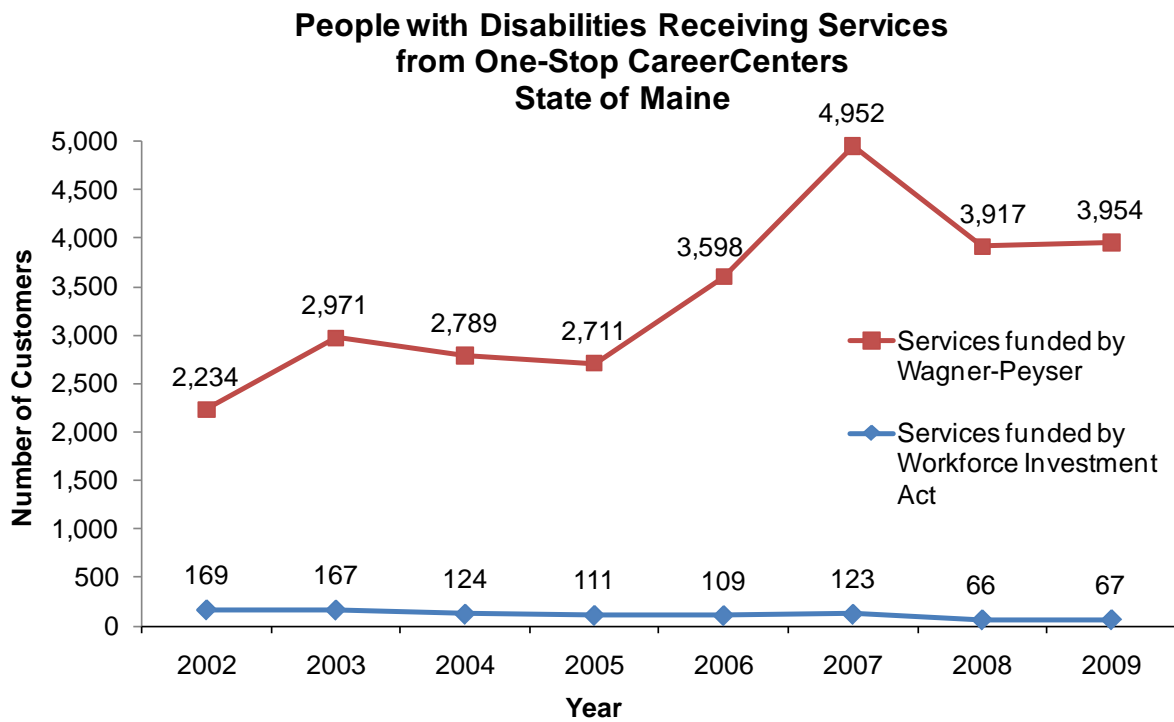
More than 3,900 adults with disabilities received employment services at the CareerCenters with funding provided by the Wagner-Peyser Act. From 2002 through 2009, the number of adults with disabilities receiving Wagner-Peyser services increased by an average of 246 customers each year.

As of January 2011, there were 1,399 registered job seekers with disabilities on the Maine Job Bank (an on-line job posting service offered by CareerCenters).

Of the 161 youth served in the Summer Youth Employment Program in 2010 (funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act), approximately 43 percent were youth with disabilities.

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<sup>3</sup> For federal reporting purposes, customers served by the Adult and Dislocated worker programs are only counted after they have “exited”, meaning the customer has not received services within the past 90 days as of the end of the year or self-reported that they are exiting. As a result, these figures do not include everyone who received services at a CareerCenter; customers who received services within the past 90 days or who have services scheduled are not included.

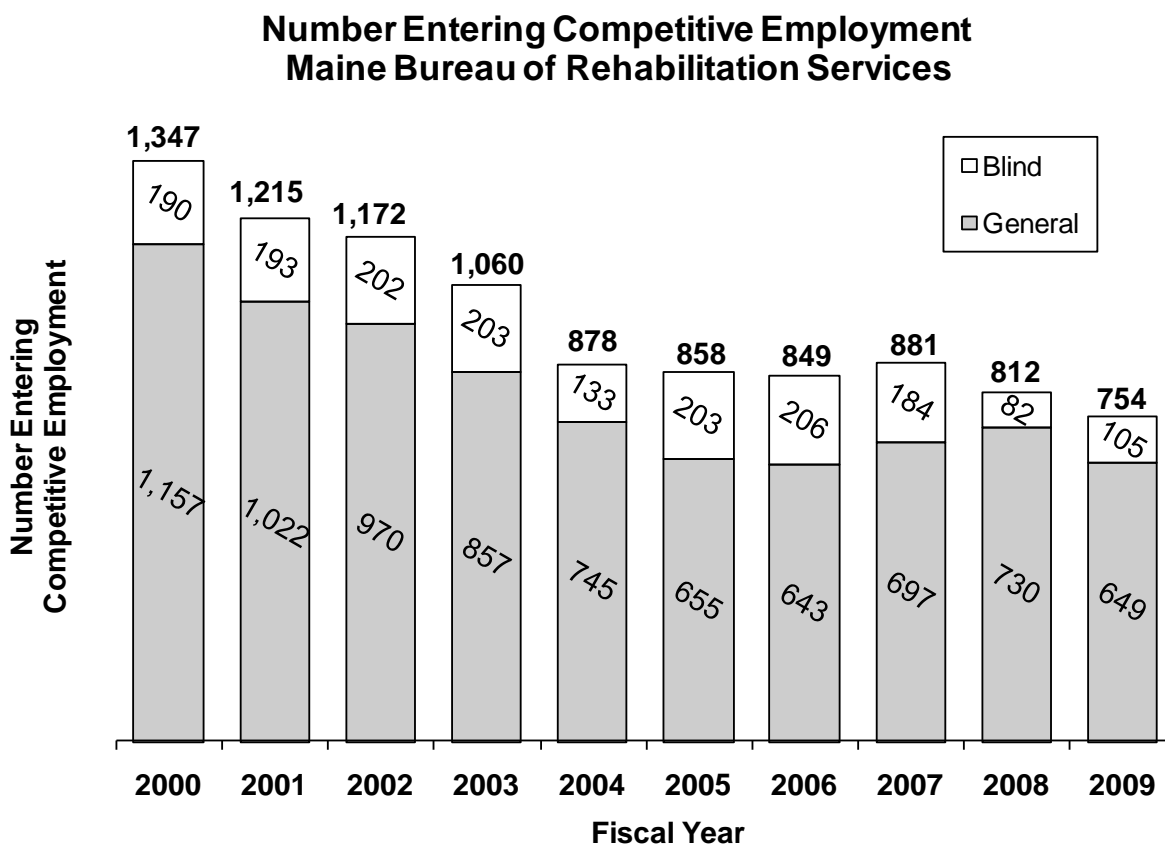


Source: U.S. Department of Labor, WIA National Performance Reports and Wagner-Peyser State by State Performance Reports

## Chart VII. Number Entering Competitive Employment: Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

The Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) provides people with severe disabilities a variety of services to help them get or keep a job. These services include job development and placement, job training, and rehabilitation technology. In fiscal year 2009, 754 people with severe disabilities entered competitive employment and stayed employed for a minimum of 90 days after receiving BRS services. Of those, 649 were served by the General Vocational Rehabilitation program, and 105 were served by the Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

On average, people who got jobs in 2009 after participating in the General Vocational Rehabilitation program worked 26 hours per week and earned \$11 per hour. People served by the Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired worked an average of about 28 hours per week and earned an average of \$16 per hour.



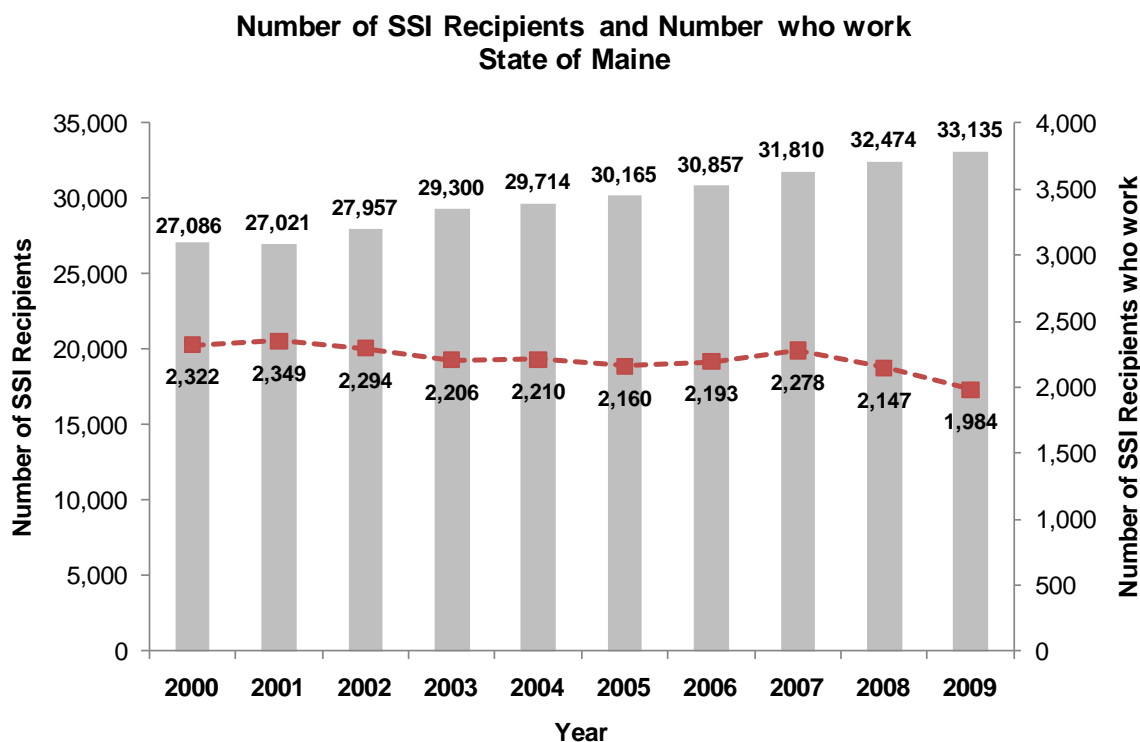
Source: RSA 911 Data ([www.statedata.info](http://www.statedata.info))

## Chart VIII. Employment of Individuals on Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a federal program that gives cash support to very poor people with severe disabilities. In 2009, there were 33,135 individuals receiving SSI in Maine; of these, 1,934 (6 percent) were working.

The number of SSI beneficiaries in Maine rose steadily over the past eight years, from 27,000 in 2000 to more than 33,000 in 2009. The number of SSI beneficiaries who worked has remained between 2,100 and 2,350 for most of this period, but dropped below 2,000 in 2009. The proportion of SSI recipients who work fell from 8.6 percent in 2000 down to 6.0 percent in 2009.

Work incentives are special rules that make it possible for SSI beneficiaries to work and still receive monthly payments. Very few SSI beneficiaries in Maine use the available work incentives. Of all the blind or disabled SSI recipients statewide, only 44 had a “Plan for Achieving Self-Support” and only 14 took advantage of the “Impairment-related Work Expenses” income exclusion.



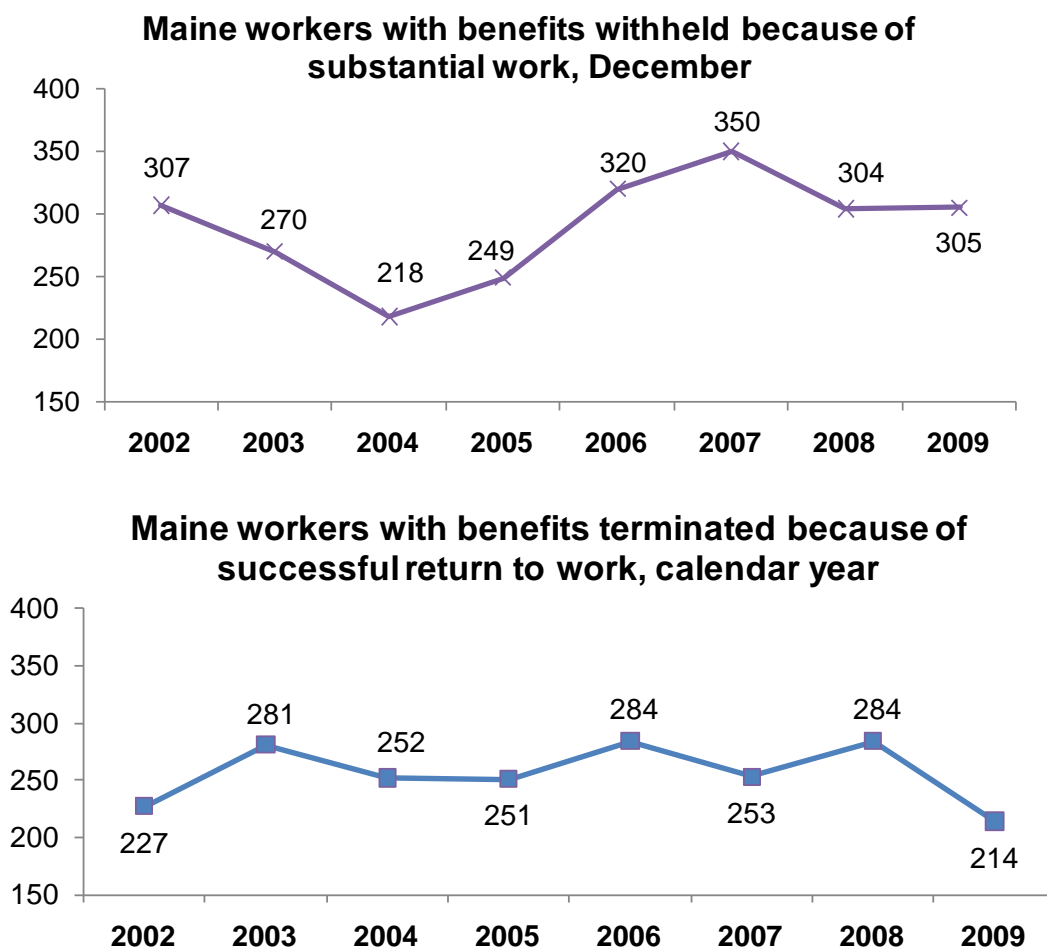
Source: Social Security Administration, SSI Annual Statistical Reports

## Chart IX. Employment of Individuals on Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) is a federal program that gives cash support to workers who have become disabled, and their spouses and children. In 2009, there were 53,959 disabled workers receiving SSDI benefits in Maine. Of those individuals, 305 (0.6%) had benefits withheld because their earnings exceeded the amount under the Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) rules set by the Social Security Administration.

In addition, 214 individuals with disabilities (0.4%) had their SSDI benefits terminated because of a successful return to work. Over the past several years, there has been no clear trend in the number of SSDI beneficiaries who had benefits withheld because of work or who had a successful return to work.

Note: The monthly SGA amount in 2009 was \$980 for non-blind individuals, and \$1,640 for blind individuals.

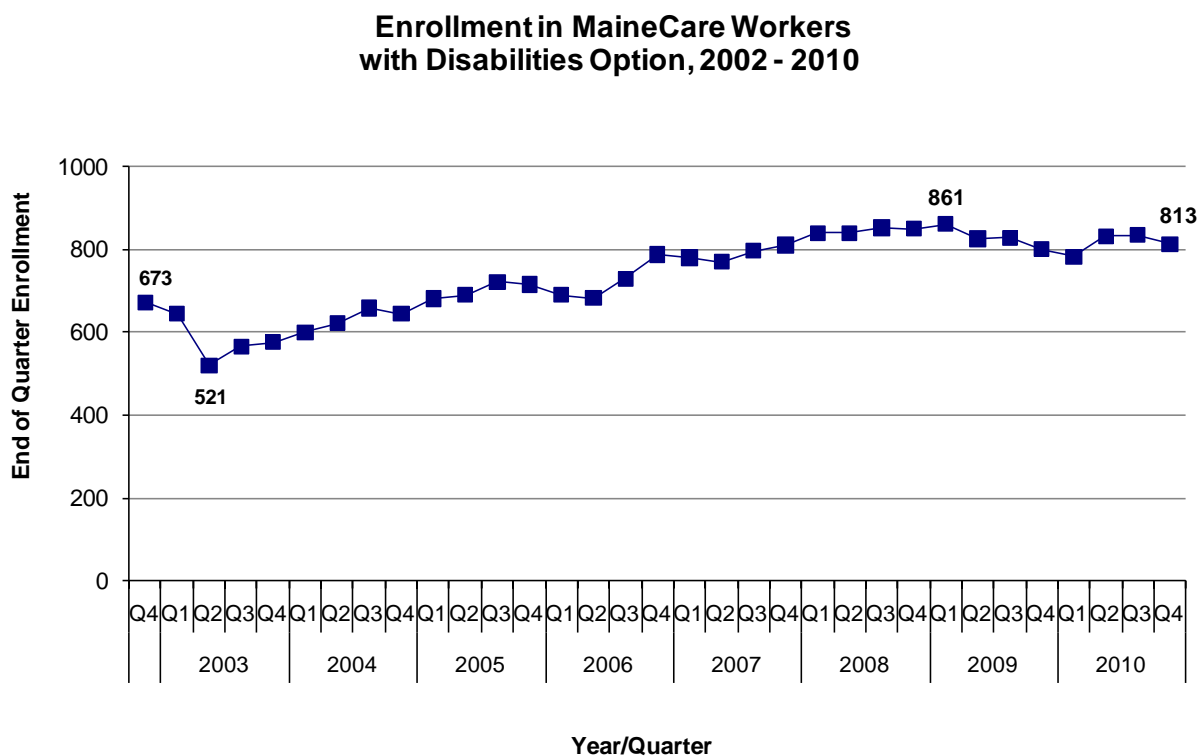


Source: Social Security Administration, SSDI Annual Statistical Reports



## Chart X. Enrollment in the MaineCare Workers with Disabilities Option

The MaineCare Workers with Disabilities Option (WWD Option) allows low-income people with disabilities in Maine's Medicaid program to earn more by working while keeping their health coverage. From 2003 to 2009, the number of people enrolled in the WWD Option went down and then climbed up again—from a low of 521 in the second quarter of 2003, back up to a high of 861 in the first quarter of 2009. Since that time, monthly enrollment declined moderately, ending 2010 with 813 enrolled workers.



Source: MaineCare Eligibility Data

## American Community Survey Disability Definition

The U.S. Census Bureau defines a disability as: "...the restriction in participation that results from a lack of fit between the individual's functional limitations and the characteristics of the physical and social environment."

Using this definition as a framework, the 2008 American Community Survey identifies serious difficulty in four basic areas of functioning: vision, hearing, ambulation, and cognition. The ACS also includes two questions to identify people who have difficulties that might impact their ability to live independently. The six different types of disability are identified using the six questions outlined in Table 1 (next page). People aged 16-64 are classified as having a disability if they report having serious difficulty in at least one of these areas.<sup>4</sup>

**Note that the Census Bureau changed the measurement of disability in the 2008 ACS, preventing comparison to earlier years.** The most notable change to the 2008 disability measure includes the separation of the "sensory disability" question into two separate questions designed to measure hearing and vision difficulties. Also, the measure for employment disability was dropped altogether from the 2008 ACS because several studies had found that respondents had difficulty understanding the intended meaning.<sup>5</sup>

More information about the American Community Survey and other data sources cited in this document can be found online at: [choices.muskie.usm.maine.edu/dashboard/about\\_data.html](http://choices.muskie.usm.maine.edu/dashboard/about_data.html)

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<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Office. 2008 Subject Definitions. [www.census.gov/acs/www/UseData/Def.htm](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/UseData/Def.htm). Retrieved February 5, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Brault, Matthew (September 2009). Review of Changes to the Measurement of Disability in the 2008 American Community Survey. U.S. Census Bureau. [www.census.gov/hhes/www/disability/2008ACS\\_disability.pdf](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/disability/2008ACS_disability.pdf). Retrieved December 29, 2009.

**Table 1. Disability Definitions from the 2008 and 2009 American Community Surveys and Comparison to Prior Years**

2008-2009 American Community Surveys		2003 – 2007 American Community Surveys	
Census Term	Question	Census Term	Question
<b>Hearing difficulty</b>	Is this person deaf or does he/she have serious difficulty hearing?	<b>Sensory disability</b>	Does this person have any of the following long-lasting conditions: Blindness, deafness, or a severe vision or hearing impairment?
<b>Vision difficulty</b>	Is this person blind or does he/she have serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses?	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Hearing and vision questions were not separated in 2003-2007 ACS</i>
<b>Ambulatory difficulty</b>	Does this person have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs?	<b>Physical disability</b>	A condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, or carrying?
<b>Cognitive difficulty</b>	Because of a physical, mental or emotional condition, does this person have serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions?	<b>Mental disability</b>	Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition lasting six months or more, does this person have any difficulty in doing any of the following activities: Learning, remembering, or concentrating?
<b>Self-care difficulty</b>	Does this person have serious difficulty dressing or bathing?	<b>Self-care disability</b>	Dressing, bathing, or getting around inside the home?
<b>Independent living difficulty</b>	Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, does this person have difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor's office or shopping?	<b>Go-outside-the-home disability</b>	Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition lasting six months or more, does this person have any difficulty in doing any of the following activities: Going outside the home alone to shop or visit a doctor's office?
<i>N/A</i>	<i>Employment disability question not included in 2008 ACS.</i>	<b>Employment disability</b>	Working at a job or business?

**Source:** Brault, Matthew (September 2009). Review of Changes to the Measurement of Disability in the 2008 American Community Survey. U.S. Census Bureau.  
[www.census.gov/hhes/www/disability/2008ACS\\_disability.pdf](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/disability/2008ACS_disability.pdf)

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